

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY RABAT
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 2790

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB TS PFOR
SUBJ: PSD ISSUES WHITE PAPER ON JANUARY 26

1. SUMMARY. PSD ISSUED 100-PAGE WHITE PAPER ON APRIL
14 ENTITLED "THE CONTRACTUAL POLICY AND THE EVENTS OF
JANUARY 1978".
BOOK WAS CIRCULATED TO DIPLOMATIC
MISSIONS AND FOREIGN PRESS CORPS IN TUNIS.
OBVIOUS PURPOSE IS TO DEFEND GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES
OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BASED ON PRINCIPAL OF SOCIAL
PARTNERS, AND TO DEMONSTRATE ACHOUR'S RESPONSIBILITY
FOR UPRISINGS WHICH OCCURED IN JANUARY. ALTHOUGH
GREAT DEAL OF WORK HAS GONE INTO THIS WHITE PAPER AND ITS
CONTENTS APPEAR TO BE FACTUALLY ACCURATE, IT IS NOT
ENTIRELY SUCCESSFUL IN OBJECTIVE OF PROVING ACHOUR'S
GUILT IN PLOTTING AGAINST SECURITY OF STATE. END SUMMARY.

2. PARTY'S WHITE PAPER IS DIVIDED INTO TWO CHAPTERS. FIRST
FIFTY PAGES DEAL WITH TUNISIAN ECONOMY SINCE 1970, STRESSING
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RAPID EXPANSION OF INVESTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT AND CONSE-
QUENT IMPROVEMENT IN LIVING STANDARDS FOR TUNISIAN WORKING
CLASSES. STRESS IS LAID ON INCREASES IN MINIMUM WAGES
AND REAL INCOME FOR POORER SEGMENTS OF POPULATION, AND
ON SOCIAL PACT SIGNED IN JANUARY 1977 WHICH PROVIDES
STRUCTURAL BASIS FOR CONTINUED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
CEVELOPMENT IN ATMOSPHERE OF STABILITY AND COMMON PURPOSE.

3. SECOND CHAPTER, ENTITLED "UNION LEADERSHIP: FROM AMBIGUITY TO SUBVERSION," SEEKS TO TRACE ACHOUR'S EVOLUTION FROM BEING RESPONSIBLE HEAD OF UGTT AND CLOSE COLLABORATOR WITH GOVERNMENT AND PARTY TO LEADER OF PLOT AGAINST SECURITY AND INSTITUTIONS OF STATE. EMPHASIS IS GIVEN TO INTERPRETATION THAT JAN 26 GENERAL STRIKE WAS PREMEDITATED MOVE AIMED AT "CHALLENGING, PARALYZING AND DESTROYING AUTHORITY OF STATE" THROUGH SUBVERSION AND VIOLENCE. ALTHOUGH LIBYAN CONNECTION IS ONLY HINTED AT, UNHOLY ALLIANCE BETWEEN ACHOUR AND MASMOUDI IS HIGHLIGHTED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. ICFTU SECRETARY GENERAL OTTO KERSTEN IS ALSO CRITICIZED FOR UNHELPFUL ROLE HE PLAYED IN PUBLICLY ENDORSING GENERAL STRIKE ON BEHALF OF "500 MILLION MEMBERS OF ICFTU." CHAPTER ALSO EXPLAINS GOVERNMENTS REPEATED BUT UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TOWARDS RECONCILIATION AND DEFENDS ACTIONS WHICH IT WAS FINALLY FORCED TO TAKE TO RESTORE ORDER ON JAN 26 IN RESPONSE TO PLOT.

4. SAYAH TOLD US SEVERAL WEEKS AGO THAT WHITE PAPER WOULD BE ISSUED SHORTLY TO PUT MATTERS STRAIGHT AS TO WHAT HAPPENED ON JAN 26 AND TO EVENT LOVECEDING "ACHOUR'S ATTACK ON SECURITY OF STATE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS." MANY IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNTRUE THINGS HAVE BEEN SAID ABOUT THIS TRAGEDY, SAYAH COMPLAINED, AND WHITE PAPER WILL PROVE THAT ACHOUR ALONE BEARS RESPONSIBILITY. GOVERNMENT
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HAD DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND STRIKE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH LEGITIMATE TRADE UNION OBJECTIVES OR WORKERS' INTERESTS. IN TRUTH, SAYAH SIAD, IT WAS VEHICLE FOR ACHOUR TO MAKE LONG PLANNED ATTACK ON REGIME FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL AMBITIONS.

5. WHITE PAPER PROBABLY REFLECTS BRIEF OF CASE GOVERNMENT WILL PRESENT AGAINST ACHOUR AND HIS SUPPORTERS IN CIVIL TRIAL NOW EXPECTED TO OPEN IN LAST HALF OF MAY. GREAT DEAL OF WORK HAS GONE INTO PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT, WHICH ACCORDING TO SAYAH WAS PERSONALLY APPROVED BY PRIME MINISTER. AS FAR AS IT GOES, IT APPEARS TO BE FACTUALLY CORRECT AND CAREFULLY RESEARCHED. PAPER TRACES EVOLUTION OF CLASH AND MAKES GOOD CASE FOR GOVERNMENT'S CONTENTION THAT ACHOUR AND COMPANY WERE LOOKING FOR POLITICAL SHOWDOWN WITH REGIME. IT FALLS SHORT, HOWEVER, OF PROVING CONTENTION THAT ACHOUR'S ACTIONS WERE PLOT DESIGNED TO DESTROY THE STATE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS.

6. COPY OF WHITE PAPER IN FRENCH BEING POUCHED DEPARTMENT SEPARATELY. ENGLISH LANGUAGE VERSION, WHICH IS NOW

BEING PRINTED, WILL ALSO BE SUBMITTED AS SOON AS AVAILABLE.
MULCAHY

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Message Attributes

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